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May 26, 2011

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Commissioners:

The National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL) is the preeminent organization serving and representing the interests of Hispanic state lawmakers from all states, commonwealths, and territories of the United States. Our membership includes representatives elected in diverse districts including many Latino communities. Access to technology, and expanded digital literacy and expansion of Latino mobile technology adoption has been a core issue for our membership – leading us to form a taskforce of legislators who, have tackled the issues facing Latinos and the digit divide in advocacy with the FCC, Congress and the White House, while promoting policies in our states that facilitate much needed access. We write today to add our experience to the Commission's evaluation of the proposed acquisition of T-Mobile by AT&T.

In October 2010, our organization's *Broadband En Action* taskforce presented, "Expanding Opportunities in the Hispanic Community: Solutions for Increased Broadband Access." The paper articulated the vision of NHCSL - full digital inclusion for all Americans - which is endangered by an ongoing digital divide where Hispanics continue to lag in meaningful broadband adoption that can only be realized by fully digitally literate communities. Broadband and information technology are drivers for job creation, job training, educational reform, healthcare delivery, greater competitiveness for small businesses, and increased access to government services.

As articulated in NHCSL's paper, Four Principles for facilitating full digital inclusion are:

1. Digital literacy must become an American value.
2. Public and private investment is central to full digital inclusion through full access and adoption.
3. Digital innovation is key to economic growth and all communities must be part of that growth.
4. Broadband is an equalizer.

We believe policymakers must focus on IT education and creating policies that bridge the digital adoption gaps for underserved communities. Additionally, understanding how the Hispanic community accesses broadband and why, should inform and help shape the Commission's decision-making process as it moves forward with key policy proposals.

Increased adoption in communities of color will only occur through increased investment in infrastructure and new technology, and through innovation in business models that address the needs of minority-owned businesses and price-sensitive consumers. These investments will only occur in a competitive marketplace where policies that promote private expenditures and public/private partnerships enable the necessary technological upgrades and long-term deployment.

For these reasons and others, we support AT&T's acquisition of T-Mobile. AT&T has committed, as part of this transaction, billions of dollars in new accelerated investment to bring wireless broadband to nearly all of the United States. This investment will help our economy and it will unlock other benefits important to the Hispanic community. While the labor organizations have articulated the benefits to Hispanic workers in the proposed acquisition, NHCSL is also gratified to see a deal that will create jobs for workers that include a large number of Hispanics, who will be engaged in the upgrade of the T-Mobile network. AT&T's employment record similarly provides comfort to our membership in supporting AT&T in expanding its worker-friendly approach to T-Mobile's workforce.

We believe broadband adoption provides unprecedented opportunities to leverage technology to close the gaps in various economic and social disparities experienced by Hispanics. It is, in fact, the rural communities of Hispanics, which the latest census numbers tell us is growing who are most likely to be on the wrong side of the digital divide. We understand this acquisition will bring high-speed wireless Internet to places across the country that continue to be underserved – this will be an economic and social benefit to all communities, including Hispanics.

Increased access to broadband networks, both wired and wireless, are the economic backbone of the future. Therefore, we encourage the FCC to do what it can to expedite the AT&T/T-Mobile deal, as it will encourage investment in next generation wireless broadband technologies and enable social and economic opportunity for our constituents, our states and millions of Americans throughout the country.

We thank the Commission for its consideration as it moves forward with this matter.

Sincerely,



Senator Iris Y. Martinez (IL)
NHCSL President



Senator Juan M. Pichardo (RI)
Co-Chair
NHCSL *Broadband En Acción* Taskforce



Representative Joseph E. Miro (DE)
Co-Chair
NHCSL *Broadband En Acción* Taskforce